

Michaud Begins Work with Congressional Leaders to Improve Economy, Participates in Forum on Economic Recovery Plan

Wednesday, January 07 2009

Michaud pushes to ensure that rural communities receive their fair share of federal funds

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressman Mike Michaud participated in a forum chaired by Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller and Congresswoman Rosa Delauro, which focused on the current economic outlook and the components of an economic recovery plan necessary to create jobs and long-term economic growth. The forum featured a panel of economists and experts in infrastructure investments.

Michaud pushes to ensure that rural communities receive their fair share of federal funds

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressman Mike Michaud participated in a forum chaired by Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller and Congresswoman Rosa Delauro, which focused on the current economic outlook and the components of an economic recovery plan necessary to create jobs and long-term economic growth. The forum featured a panel of economists and experts in infrastructure investments.

“Mainers are hurting and so are millions of American families,” said Michaud. “Our serious economic troubles will not be solved overnight, but we must take action to improve the economy. Not acting would pose a greater threat. This Congress needs to act swiftly to pass a responsible economic recovery package. This means making sure that congressional committees have a chance to closely examine the components of it. But it also means that we include strict accountability measures in whatever we bring up for a vote. When billions of dollars of the taxpayers’ money is on the line, we must ensure that we are making investments that will provide a substantial return for the American people.”

Congress is working with President-elect Obama’s transition team to create fiscally responsible legislation that would create and save 3 million jobs in the next 2 years – and make the economy stronger in the long run. While legislation has yet to be formally introduced, the plan, dubbed by President-elect Obama as the “American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan,” contains a number of priorities including renewable energy production, investment in transportation and infrastructure, improvements to health infrastructure, rebuilding and improving our education infrastructure, and tax relief for businesses and middle-income families.

In addition to participating in today’s forum, Michaud also joined a number of his colleagues in signing onto a letter to Speaker Pelosi urging her to support provisions in an economic stimulus package to ensure that rural communities receive their fair share of federal funds.

“Facing rising unemployment, rural America cannot afford to be shortchanged in an economic recovery package,” stated Michaud and his fellow colleagues. “As representatives of rural districts, we know that rural communities are prepared with ready-to-go infrastructure projects that could put people to work within months. Rural communities have the workforce and the infrastructure needs to effectively utilize new federal spending. Rural areas should be provided with an equitable share of economic stimulus funds to improve their local economies just like metropolitan communities.”

The full text of the letter to Speaker Pelosi is attached.

#

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

Speaker of the House

U.S. House of Representatives

H-232 The Capitol

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

As you continue to craft an economic stimulus package, it is critical that the benefits of any stimulus are broadly distributed throughout rural, urban, and suburban America. Approximately 50 million Americans live in rural communities. An economic stimulus package must recognize that rural Americans make vital contributions to our economy and face the same struggles with rising unemployment as people living in urban and suburban communities. In fact, seasonally adjusted unemployment rates for non-metropolitan areas were higher each quarter in 2008 than for metropolitan areas. We urge you to support provisions in an economic stimulus package to ensure that rural communities receive their fair share of federal funds.

We strongly support your continued efforts to include infrastructure spending in a recovery package. However, legislation with infrastructure spending that ultimately only funds projects in urban and suburban communities will fail to provide the broad economic benefit the American people expect. Facing rising unemployment, rural America cannot afford to be shortchanged in an economic recovery package. As representatives of rural districts, we know that rural communities are prepared with ready-to-go infrastructure projects that could put people to work within months. Rural communities have the workforce and the infrastructure needs to effectively utilize new federal spending. Rural areas should be provided with an equitable share of economic stimulus funds to improve their local economies just like metropolitan communities.

The Job Creation and Unemployment Relief Act of 2008, H.R. 7110, included a provision to distribute stimulus funds between rural and metropolitan communities. Funds in the Federal Transit Administration Transit Capital Assistance Grants were specifically reserved for rural formula grants. Congress should build on the precedent created by the transit funds in the Job Creation and Unemployment Relief Act with guarantees in new economic recovery legislation to ensure an equitable distribution of all infrastructure funds between rural and metropolitan areas.

We look forward to working with you to improve our nation's economy and strengthen rural America through the economic recovery package. Thank you for your continued leadership during this economic crisis.

Sincerely,